



Los Angeles Poems

By Jonathan Elliott
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The Significance of Power

“Power”, he said waving a cigarette in the air,
“Is something I would never want.”

I looked around at the place, the oven on the fritz
The landlord, he said, would come soon, complain
About all the money it would take to fix the thing.
I offered to buy his family a pizza for dinner
And they lit up like christmas trees, the thought
Of having food for the first time in two days.
He had been struggling with heroin for more than forty years
And he said that quitting this next time was going to kill him for sure
And in the end, I think it did.

Ahmet loved America. He came from Istanbul in his twenties,
Wanted to be a jazz composer and we both played piano
And smoked together.
He met his wife in Berkeley when I was a college student there
And we all moved to Los Angeles.

I got a job in a law office and he got a job as a taxi dispatcher.
When 911 happened he was accused of being a Muslim terrorist
And fired the day after the event.

So there was not a great deal to talk about during the pizza
But the one thing that I always appreciated about Ahmet
Was that no matter how poor he was, he never ceased
To laugh.

As the Days Go By

Freedom is often noumenal I think
Going unperceived by the human experience
The bars of the jail, the walls closing in
Feeling like you are living, breathing in a box,
Makes you come to terms with it.

I think when you are eating popcorn at the movies
You have little understanding of the nature of freedom
Or what it means to us as Americans, how little we
Preoccupy ourselves with the one thing that is so important
To each and every one of us.

Everytime I Turn Around

Breathing
Listening
Feeling

The impenetrable facade of youth
Wasting away at me
Looking through the distance without grief
Trying to change the world
My father would say
You can't change the world
You can only change yourself

So why bother
To worry about the world?

Does the world
Worry about you?

Change Comes Over Us

When we are young
We never
notice the time
moving
Beyond us.
Time is a habit,
Krishnamurti speaks.
We have to face
the eternal reality
and understand
That past present and future
are all the same thing.

The Least of It

There is an old expression
About how people only tell you
Half the story
Tell me the least of it
I want to know
All the parts
You feel
You want to leave out
I want to know
The ins and outs
The details
That aren't so beautiful
The mystifying
The part
That is hard to listen to
I want to know
All those effortless
Claims
Moving back and forth
Between human dignity
And misunderstanding
The surreal plots
That man contrives
Against itself
For the benefit of no one
I want to know

Time, Endless Time

The unspeakable
Drama of age
Time dancing upon us
Like the glowing leaves
Of forgotten summers
Those misbegotten strangers
Who enter our lives
Coming and going
The resonance of learning
Constant struggles
Between people
I do not always comport myself
To the trivial aspects of
Time

But it speaks to me regardless
In strange ways sometimes
Dancing through the heart of strangers
Incipient, colluding, distracting, arranging
The nuances of chance
Interwoven
With the heartaches of present time
That project themselves
Into future ones

I am always at the center of my own self
Trying to recognize my needs
They seem to haunt me
In unseen ways

Jazz of Blue Moons

The walls are stone
Sometimes I scream
The claustrophobia kicks in
There is nothing I can do
To breathe
In the small empty room
My roommate killed someone
He reads the bible during the day
Trying to find salvation
I trade peanut butter for cookies
We watch television in the afternoons
Everyone has tattoos but me
They come around with pills
Near the end of the evening
They give out extra cookies
So I take them
I write on the back of lunch bags
The prison guards take them
My life is receding into age
I think of the girls
I left behind
Maybe one day
I will see a sign
Of love
In a loveless world

The First Day of Spring

When I was finally released from jail
The sky cleared from a hard rain
Back to an edgeless sky of drama
Without clouds, filled with heat
The roads to rehab filled with cars
We stopped for cigarettes
I hadn't smoked in three months
The new room was nice
A few young roommates
I was happy to be someplace else
Anywhere but LA County jail
The judge made me swear not to smoke grass
I told him it was ok I wouldn't smoke
He said alright you can go, for now

End of A Long Weekend

I went to the market
And bought a bunch of junk
Potato chips
Cookies, ice cream
Soda pop
I never seem to get enough
Junk food
I eat ice cream at night
Cookies in the afternoon
Drink soda all day long

The Skid Row Saints

Haggard sullen faces amidst cardboard boxes made into homes
The parking lot at night filled with junkies
In the morning, lines for fried chicken
Some sleep with blankets in the midst of sidewalks
Leading to the retail stores, the courthouse, other places
Their own story lost to them
In the oblivion of darkness that has filled their lives
With the indistinct value of homelessness
They lose sense of themselves
Jealousy and rage fill their hearts or disappear, it's
One way or the other
And it's hard to tell
One from the other
Their eyes gleaming in the teamed up streets of dawn
Reckless and abandoned by
The captors
Of industry and time
That know no limit
To the seduction of money
And they have lost sense of that too.

Implicit Response

My underwear is missing
Someone took it out of the hamper
The house is crowded with people
We have a one a.m curfew
Sometimes I wonder
If a military state
Would be easier.

I kid myself
Going back to France
I don't even speak French

We go to the movies
It's three hours long
Cartoon characters
Battling monsters

I order new underwear
Save the date on the calendar
For when it arrives

Maybe I'll throw a party.

Jealousy and the Rain of Lover's

Madness is like a spell in passion
Don't let yourself sink into it
Don't give yourself away
To a person
Who would rather be shopping

There is a madness to jealousy
And a madness to rage
It lingers in the smoked filled pubs
Waiting to erupt
I stay out of them these days

The world can be an empty place
When you are alone
Try to find a lover
Try to fall in love
Try and find someone true
And never give in
To the jealousies
That linger like the smoke
Of smoke filled rooms

Sadness Fills the Room

Those desolate places
All those halfway houses and rehabs
Where they wanted me to
Kick the habit
Live a new life
I went through one at a time
Wondering
When the world could accept me
For who I am
Not what they wanted
The world to be like

Sadness fills the room like
Darkness in the evening
The sun coming down
And night putting the sky
At ease

A guy picks up a cup of coffee
Next to me
He's trembling
Detoxing from alcohol
We laugh
At the sadness
We don't let it get to us
We talk about it
Like an old friend

Somewhere, Anywhere
as long as we're on the Rue De Haute

I smell the flowers like the wine now
they come to me in the morning
breathing color, life into the soul of me
expressing my joy, the unlimited routes
to which I am, receding the signs before
the Rue De Haute says to me certainly

this is the place, I'll feel her in my hands
this is the place, I'll touch her right here
I'll wonder what is love across this flowered
field, and field as I betrayed it

maybe she'll cry to me after killing someone
expecting forgiveness
or meek in the disaster
want to see my rage
as it disappears
into
flowers

if she can keep her hand in mine
through the marigolds without whispering
love has no name

it might be that easy

Blue Subway Car Girl

you go there
out somewhere
your pill bottom hat
the one with the string
attached

Don't Do It

a lesson to the wise
a lesson to the foolish
the same thing

I come around the edge of the page too fast
like I know about my youth

the one lie
of the one truth
that exists

as two

I'm Going Somewhere

The phone rings
I'm on my way out
There's always something to do
Someone who has to get left behind
Like Aeneas carrying his father
On his shoulders
After the Trojan War

Blackout Days of Emptiness

Love is going
To thrill your mind
You'll see him at a cafe
Or wandering through the park
You'll see her
In her summer print dress
Or on her way home from work
Why not take the time
To stop
And say hello
Hello to love
There is always that menacing suggestion
Like
Someone's feelings are going to get hurt
Don't let it bother you
It is better to have loved than lost
Right?

Now Finish my Sentence

The electric chair of groove
Is that Saturday night
At the typewriter
With a bag of chips
And your notes
Spread out before you
The empty oblivion
Of change
Riding into the wind
Like a sparrow crossing the highway
Or the interchange of looks
Between new lovers
It has to be that way
I impart to you
A knowledge
I know nothing of

Happiness is a Virtue

 Your dirty stinking mind again
Got you into this
 Sit down and relax
 Have a drink of lemonade
 Get to know yourself
A little better
 This is going to be a long ride
Poetry

Adieu My Love

I'm leaving this note
To say I love you
That I never even cared
About the money
Or anything else
I just wanted to find you
There
Sitting at your desk
Smiling
So I could enter with a cheap smile
And get a glimpse of you
For a moment in time
Before I
Disappear

It's Getting Cold Outside

Clouds moving
Like a reign of terror
Across the sky
Moving along avenues
I stop and catch my breath
Everything is cold
The light pole is cold
The sidewalk is cold
Cold sips of coca cola
In the afternoon
Just make it a little colder
I'm trying to see myself through this
Listening to myself again
Trying to figure out what I want
The deep solitude of reasoning
As I search
For the sanity within myself
To move beyond the craziness
That is everywhere
Sounds of passing cars
Craziness
Feet moving along the hardwood floor
More craziness
Everything crazy
The sun sinking below the sea
Appearing again tomorrow
Craziness

Afternoon Lazy

I ate a plate of chicken,
took a nap,
watched the basketball game
The listless hours dissolved
into nightfall

I ate ice cream in the dark
the smell of floor cleaner
From the other room
I'm told that air is ancient
like the firmament

I smoke a cigarette
tell myself it's time to quit
get to bed early
trying to forget myself
in words

Ghosts of Hollywood

They say there are ghosts in Hollywood
I have never seen any
but there are all kinds of stories
Marilyn comes out at night
in the kitchen of the Roosevelt Hotel
and says goodnight to a dishwasher
a famous director steals scissors from
aspiring cameraman in the lobby
of a commercial building
everywhere you turn
people have stories
I don't know what to believe.

Lost In Sadness

 You find sadness
All over the streets
 People immersed
In the slow, methodical
 Collision of time
Wearing them thin
 Of their own abilities
Looking vulnerable
 And complete
Or incomplete
 Depending how long
They have lived with the sadness
 Driving them along
Plundered of reserve
 Trying hard
 To spark the gift of life
From the grasp of erosion
 And solace

Tell Me Now

Memories seem to sift
From the long edge of time
Imbued with the delicate nourishment
Of the past
Clinging to survivors

I have known
That time speaks
In silent ways

I have seen the deserted faces
Of men
Trampled by legions of gospel
Ruined soldiers
Who forgot
Themselves
In battle

I'm Almost Sad

I can't get rid of myself
Run down dark alleys
Trying to lose my shadow

Float through the streets at dawn
Trying to awaken my soul

I see a great light
When I close my eyes

I decide to rent the earth to martians, cheat them in the deal
Offer a discount rate, then go
To a ballgame, drink beer
Have a hot dog and think
I'm almost sad

The Void of Darkness

At night

When the moon is full
I stand in a parking lot
Watching the stars move
Beyond me
The void of time
Like an aging beauty queen
Turning into an old lady
I wonder how old
the moon is

Those Gone Days

When we are young
Life is an open book
The pages turning
Like seasons of a dance
We recite ourselves
The people we choose to become
Each one of us knowing
And not knowing
What the future brings
From our growing hearts

The Last Time

Calamity hides in my closet
Breathing deep at night
Creaking the door open
To watch me when I sleep
Calamity paces the room
While I'm at the market
Streaks down the street
Whenever I close my eyes
Makes the headlines
With one tragedy after another
There's nothing I can do about it

Born to Sing the Blues

Billie Holiday on smokey filled nights
Playing sweetly on the radio
Reminding me
Of a past
Beyond my years
I can feel
Like time
Is a choice
We enter
Like a door
But I will emerge
The same
As before
only touched
By her music

I'm Telling Myself

God knows I've tried
I say to myself
Everytime
I feel
I fail myself, I think
At times
Smoking too much
Ignoring every sign of age
There is a child in me
That still wants to play
I can't reconcile
The years
With every failure
I just try
To forget them

Scorpio in Retrograde

I'm weary
Out of energy
Can't fall asleep
The world turns
I listen to parrots
Clambering in the backyard
I eat cereal
In the morning
Wondering
What the day will bring
The hours move
Fruitlessly forward
Days turn into nights
Turn into days
I'm aware
But don't know it
It's all I can do
To forgive myself
Just sitting still

Moral Conflict

Nations fight

Against

Other Nations

The people of my town

Never seem to notice

Everything just goes on

One day after another

Shopping at the market

A day at the library

Everything is always quiet

The morality

Was never a conflict

Until we

Began to run out of gas

Hollywood Press

The paper comes for free
Advertising everything
From sex to theater
I don't know what to believe
Anymore, except for the forest fires
That blaze their way across mountains
Destroying homes

I lapse
At the vision
Of news
It's never good

Birds on a Wire

The hummingbird
Flutters about
Sucking flowers
A symphony of sparrows
I could listen to this
All day

When Words Fail

She was blonde, beautiful
Walking her dog
I wanted to say hello
Maybe, let's go somewhere
Get a drink, get to
Know each other
But I couldn't stop
Staring at my shoes
And sitting alone

Where is Shakespeare

In a small cafe
At Sur la Mer,
I waited with a cup of coffee
There was a giant
Red rose across the cobblestone streets
I thought it looked like
Four hundred years old
And I wondered
Where is Shakespeare

My Eyes Transfixed

Trying to be aware of myself
Tibetan bells ringing
In the music of my soul
The depths of Apollo's anger
Like so many arrows flying
Sounds of people clambering
In the distance. Thought dissolves
I am aware of the time moving
Beyond me, leaving me to wonder
Of the spectacle of life
Easy going feelings of youth
Reawaken with old photographs

I am Here

I am here
Here I am
The L.A. city streets at dusk
People crowding into restaurants
Saying goodbye to one another
On busy street corners

I think about the past,
Memories of my brother,
Mother, sister, father
Haunt me in the idea
Of leaving again for Europe
Where I find myself in unknown places

I want to reach out
Shake myself
Tell me that the time
Is of no consequence
That however time is fleeting
It is also said to be repeating
I close my eyes
Melting into
The concrete jungle

Lonely Roads, Empty Streets

Billboard of Godzilla spitting flames
Homeless woman with a blanket
Crossing the boulevard
Sun sinking into the sea
I have a coffee and pie
After dinner, do some meditation
Try to tell myself
It's just another day

Laugh

I laugh

The train is coming

I'm at the ticket

Only a matter of minutes

Before the train comes and goes

I arrive, only

At the wrong platform

The train is on its way

Without me. I laugh

There will always be

Another train

ShuffleBoard

I want to be old
And take one of those luxury cruises
Where I can play shuffleboard
Relax, have a drink,
Forget my worries
Maybe take the boat
To Mexico
Where I can hear
Mariachi Bands
Playing in the hot sun
What a life
Where do I buy
The tickets

Memories of Youth

Just when you begin to feel old
Those memories arise
Selling lemonade on the corner
Playing little league baseball
Graduating high school
Those visions return
In the silent moments
You can't decide what to do
You think to yourself
What would I have thought
Back then?

I'm Going

We don't have a reservation
The desk clerk yells firmly
I turn around suddenly and hurl a chair
Across the room, the police are called
I tell them it isn't fair
They ask me for identification
I tell them that it's alright now
I'm calm, everything is ok
Don't worry, I'm going

Climbing the Ladder

When we are young
We have dreams
Of the future
How we are going to live out life
What will the world be like
When I am older
Not that I don't feel old now
But where did the ladder go?
Sometimes the future seems
Elusive to me, like the
Three of hearts pulled
From the middle of the deck
And missing.

Soft Landings

The chair inside
Is a good one
Plush velvet green
Makes me feel
Like I'm either
In a movie
Or at one
Sometimes, the way things are going
I can't tell the difference
What does it matter
The poem will vindicate me
In a thousand years or more

The Florida Sunshine

The monsoon season came and the power
Was out in the apartment for two weeks
The market looked like Armageddon,
All those empty shelves and barely
Anything left. I watched the birds fly by
And sat at the cafe with
Carmine and George, two old men
From New York City, both retired.

We enjoyed each other's conversation
And Carmine, 92 years old
Flirted with all the young girls
He laughed a lot
We laughed a lot
Until Carmine died
I moved back to Los Angeles

What's the Matter

Everytime I turn around
Another moment escapes me
They leave through doors
With smiling faces, exonerated
Feeling sublime with
Pocket change
The moment goes on vacation
Shows me pictures of Hawaii
Invites me there at discount rates
The moment strands me in Hollywood,
I feel my face in the
Mirror of an old Hotel
I want to know all the time
Where the moment goes

Train Station

All the cab drivers
Wait by the door
Smoking cigarettes
Talking amongst themselves
While travelers
Move in and out of the station
With their bags and smiles
Happy to have arrived

This is the Life

Almost there

The sun sinks
Into the horizon

Clouds covering
Open sky

Pillows in the air
Majestic, forthright

Owning nothing
But the light

Roadside Diner

The clutch of the car
Goes out, middle of nowhere
And I guess I'm stuck
At the roadside diner.
There's a hotel
Next door, the mechanic
Tows the car. The part
Will take a day to arrive
So I spend my time
Waiting at the diner.

I'm Awake Now

The spirit shares a chamber
In the body with the soul
One is from the father
One is of God
We are all righteous
We are all wicked
Somewhere a median exists
As a balance we must find
Inside the human heart
It's a journey we take
Into ourselves, our needs,
Our wants, we're not supposed to
Want for anything
But the truth is we do.

The Farthest Reaches

Oblivion, despair,
Anger, hostility
The restless feeling
You get in the rain
They come and go
Bringing the stars and planets
Along with them
We search for comfort
From strangers
And become unknown
To ourselves

Images and Pictures

I imagine times in the past
Images of years ago
Appear in pictures of myself
I'm eating birthday cake
For my sixth birthday
I'm saying hello
My first day of kindergarten
Images and visions of the past
Memories appear before me
Reminding me of my father
Who died years ago

He talks to me with his eyes
And still the trembling vision of time
Is right before me

Planets Revolving

The sun ruled by Leo
The moon of cancer
Sky filled with tears of rain
The wind breathtaking and cold
I feel old on some days
Waiting around the city streets
Wondering where the time goes
It gets to me, the silences and
Distance, today I saw a hawk
Swirling through the trees
While a hummingbird came next to me
The rain stopped, the clouds lifted
O sole mio

A Dark and Dreary Room

The room lights up
With the bright
Hopeful faces
Of the alcoholics
Who have come together
To share their lives
In the evening
Somewhere, I imagine
An alcoholic didn't make it here
And is busy dying
Alone

What Do You Feel?

It seems so hard
Trying to understand
One another
Everyone on a computer
Trying to envision life
On a screen
I want to be free
And for people
To start
Relating
To one
Another.

We Search for Words

There is a darkness in us
Just as much as there is light
I put my glasses on the table
I can't read with them
They help me see things
Far away
My soul is illuminated
Desire and fantasy intermingle
Like they are drinking
At a cocktail party
One says to the other
I'm tired of this
The other replies
Let's go to bed

Turn Around and Face the Wall

I got arrested in October
I was sleeping in the streets again
And a young man came up to me
Told me some guys were chasing me
So I threw a rock into a
Window of a nearby house
And waited for the police to arrive
They were there in a matter of minutes
Beats getting chased by a
Bunch of guys, I thought
As they put me in handcuffs
And took me down to the station

Little Wisps of Tears

I call myself names
And tell me that it
Ain't the truth
And see things
You can stay at home
Drink beer and smoke
It's all the same to me
I never understand people
Who can't get comfortable
Just having a conversation
It seems like I'm having
One with myself again,
Or is it the moon?

Beginning

To understand
The difference
Between love and death
Future and past
The world revolving
Our lives intersect
I think
In ways we cannot know
Fortune tellers throwing cards
Astrologers who see the skies
But what is in our future
Then the love we make
today

Monday Morning

The alarm clock vibrates
On the side of my bed
It goes on and on for about ten minutes
Then, ah the alarm clock is ringing
I guess I better get up
I've got crepe mix waiting downstairs
But the syrup has been misplaced
So I'm searching the kitchen
Like a frenzied animal,
Where is my syrup?
So I eat without it,
Then find it later
Must be Monday morning

The Clock Strikes Two

I don't know where I am
The unfamiliarity
Of a new place
The lobby is nice.
They have a coffee machine
So I make a cup.
There's a television on the wall
A receptionist at the desk
He isn't here yet
He'll be here any minute
Any second, another introduction
Another job interview,
Seems like I've done this a thousand times
I'm almost fifty four now
In and out of these office buildings
For over thirty years
Who said it pays to be honest
God I wonder

I'm Almost There

You can't be too sure
When you go to a party
Don't want to be the first to arrive
Don't want to be the last to leave

Anyways, I don't get out much anymore
When I was a small boy
My father and mother took us
To all the Hollywood parties.

Inevitably, I would fall asleep on the couch
And my father would say on the way home
"I wanted to do that"
And I'd laugh, laugh and laugh

All Those Bluesed Out Mornings

How many times
I've awakened
Wondering what day it is

When I was a boy
I was first thing up in the shower
Now I need a cup of coffee
Just to get my eyes dilated
Fumble around for my glasses
Find a new pair of underwear
 Some washed pants and socks
Tell myself I might as well
Get up, face the day, swim
Into all that blues again

How Completely Indifferent

You lost yourself on the street
He went into the department store
To buy a hat
Or he left the movies early
Because he was bored with it
Or he bought an ice cream tub at the market
Then you turn around
And find yourself again
Reaching out to people
Who will never understand you
Why bother anyway

Learn to Love Yourself

We are only
On the earth
So long
We have to learn
Not to get swept away
By disappointment, loss
Sometimes plans go bad
We get carried away
With the world
It isn't easy
Living alone, or with others
We have to try everyday
To make the best of things

We grow up
Become different people
Our body changes
Hair from brown to grey
Our made up minds
Are changed
From different life experiences
We move in different ways
Our bodies change
We call it aging
It happens to everyone

Spoken Words

We hurt each other
All the things
We say
And do not mean
Why try so hard
To pick each other apart
It's easy when you try
Finding fault with others
Isn't any easier
Then having something nice to say

The Fortress of the Mind

We try to keep our mind intact
Taking vitamins, exercise
It's all we can do not to worry
The world has its way with us
It's hard to define the past from the present
We only know of senescence
And the way it feels
To live and die

These Days

Going are the motions and stillness
Into bewildered hearts, star crossed lovers
The multiplicity of circles surround us
Ever awaiting the neutral darkness
All consuming is the time and the age
Of light remembering itself in the morning
As the sun lifts from the horizon
A memory of yesterday appears before itself

The calamity of each new gone day
Passing beyond us in the desperate search
For tomorrow

I am afraid, says the sun to the sky
That in the newness of age
I will forget the meaning
Of the time

Sometimes

There is an ebb and flow to life

Things come and go

We think that life is in our fingers

And it slips from our grasp

When we are not vigilant

We need to protect ourselves

From the incongruities

And remain calm in adversity

Otherwise, what choice do we have?

Sunshine

Those days of laughter
Following along
Like a yellow swallowtail
Birds singing beyond
The fences
Cars moving slowly
There are so many feelings
One could hold onto
In a day of sunshine

Feelings

Feelings corrupt us, our mind tells us things

Reality is another place

From where our mind travels

We have to trust our feelings

We never know

Where they can take us

The Cold Ensemble

Bix Biederbecks plays in the distance
Drinks flow from the bar
People laughing, mistaken, introducing each other
The clouds cold with the rain
Come in June
I see faces in the restaurants
Beyond the city streets
People holding their lives together
In the brief intermingling
Like a seance to ghosts
They plunge into their drinks
And forget themselves
Lost in the reverie of time
Where stillness has no motion
And they become like fixtures
The clouds, the people
The cold

The Hollywood Press

The paper comes or free
Advertising everything
From sex to theater
I don't know what to believe
Anymore, except the forest fires
Which blaze their way
Across mountains
Destroying homes.
I lapse
At the vision
Of news
It's never good

Birds on a Wire

The hummingbird
Flutters about
Seeking flowers
The blue jay arrives
A symphony of sparrows
I could listen to this
All day.

When Words Fail

She was blonde, beautiful
Walking her dog
I wanted to say hello
Maybe, let's go somewhere
Get a drink, get to
Know each other
But I couldn't stop
Staring at my shoes
And sitting alone
I was alone to myself in those days
California turned cold
After years of heat
I wanted to forget myself in Normandy
And left for years
Only to arrive and wind up
In jail.

I am Here

I am here and
Here I am
The LA City streets at dusk
People crowding into restaurants
Saying goodbye to each other
On busy street corners
I think about the past,
Memories of my brother,
Mother, father, sister
Haunt me in the idea
Of leaving again
For Europe,
Where I can find myself
In unknown places

I Want to Reach Out
Shake myself
Tell me that the time
Is of no consequence
That forever time is fleeting
It is also said to be repeating
I close my eyes
 Melting into
The concrete jungle

Lonely Days, Empty Streets

Billboard of Godzilla spitting flames

Homeless woman with a blanket

Crossing the boulevard

Sun sinking low into the sea

I have coffee and pie

After dinner, do some meditation

Try to tell myself

It's just another day

I Feel Undecided

Everything can be bought and sold
The world is infinitely available
To us.
I look for work everyday
And no responses.
I wonder what it's like
Living free from guilt and shame
I eat dinner
And get the hiccups
Maybe some coffee will help

Where is Shakespeare

In a small cafe
At sur la mer,
I waited with a cup of coffee
There was a giant
Red rose across the street
I thought it looked
Four hundred years old
And I wondered
Where is Shakespeare?

My Eyes Transfixed

Trying to be aware of myself
Tibetan bells ringing
In the music of my soul
The depths of Apollo's anger
Like so many arrows flying
Sounds of people clambering
In the distance. Thought dissolves
I am aware of the time moving
Beyond me, leaving me to wonder
Of the spectacle of life
Easy going feelings of youth
Reawaken with old photographs

Fading Out

You grow up
Graduate high school
Go to college
Learn to live
With or without drugs
Sometimes they haunt you
Others are seemingly immune
They learn about it
But it doesn't wreck their lives
I wish I was
One of those

I Don't Know What to Think

It's funny
How television
Bends the mind
Telling us
How to think
How to feel
The whole world
Seems to transit
Through the empty screen
Of television

The Sonnets We Sing

Our mind and body
Are just an illusion
We struggle and need
Life becomes us,
Everything we do
Becomes a simple memory
We suffer and agonize
Over big things, small things
We have to bear in mind
Everything changes
And there are always
Second chances

These Self Defining Days

We become the people
We want to become
Growing up rich, poor
Shaped by our parents and friends
It seems everything defines us,

The news we watch,
Television, movies, radio and song

So many things
Enter our
Conscious effort
To become ourselves

Sometimes we grow up
And don't like ourselves
We can't be afraid to change

Hint of Panic

I went to the movies
Just after dinner
An old deli in the middle of town
So many memories
With the whole family
Ordering pastrami sandwiches
Scrambled eggs, orange juice
Thoughts of all those years
Now we are sitting there
Just my mother and I
With two of her friends
After all this time
They are moving the place
Down the street.

Standing There

Blossoms of summer flowers
Flowing through the streets
Leave me mesmerized by the potential
Of nature that exists
All around us
The machine eyes of headlights
Moving along the highways
As I go, I wonder if
The planets of Jupiter
And the cold ice of Neptune
As constellations appear in the
Night sky.

HomeTown Blues

June 7th, 2019

Ahmet died on this day
Three years ago.
I'm walking the familiar streets again
Stopping in for coffee, all the pretty girls
Nothing can change my mind
About how much I miss him.
I think of times
Of laughter, better times
When we were not afraid
To feel like ourselves
Before the world exchanged him
For a ghost, sitting at my side.
I call his wife and son
Looking for solace
No one answers
It feels like a part of me
Is gone, that I am worlds away
From the streets of
My childhood.
Out of my element, I guess
But not too far away
To have resounding memories
Of his laughter
And what these streets were like forty years ago.
All these down days
Laughing at the world with you
Fifty cents in our pockets
Our friendship made us rich
Even in quiet
Places of meditation
I searched for your memory
At night, reciting Kaddish
To remember your soul
To heaven.

Thinking Twice

A Path of roses
Where I sit
Quietly remembering
A million reasons why
We fail each other
And ourselves
The sun screams out
Wandering for peace,
Tossed in drama
Blending reality with illusion
Time with space

Creation and Destruction

We hold onto the ideas

Letting go of the past

Believing each other

Our only salvation

Sight Unscene

The regular way transaction
Between political drama and terror
Isolated incidences of mass shootings
Becoming more and more frequent
Homelessness, divorce, bankruptcy
All these depressing events
In our lives, leaving us
Hopeless
Don't forget
To smile

Fascination of Circuits

The robot mind advancing
Into the darkness of mystery
Truly explicit dawn uncovers
New days of technological epoch
The rhymeless afternoons of
Afterthought, flowing away
From simple language, truth
Human cruelty juxtaposed
To the sinister machine

Into the mist
The course of time has no circles
We are aware of ourselves
Just as we are aware of others
Sometimes, less so.
We have to hold on to ourselves
Give us the time to pray, heal, sleep
Everyday we awaken
To a new dimension of time
But the hours and the minutes
Are the same, like a minuet
Of a dance, a dance of
Strangers, that keeps us
In memory

Torrent of Rain

It rained this morning
And I put on my jacket
Went outside, feeling the water
It had been a long time since
Any rain had fallen in this town
And leaves were moving
Through channels of water
On the concrete path of the driveway
I thought we were in the middle
Of a drought, I wondered
To myself
And went inside
To eat breakfast

Feeling Comfortable

Sometimes we harbor resentments
That keep us sad, angry, depressed
We have to overcome ourselves
Because we are our own worst enemy
We have to let go of the idea
That our past is catching up to
Our future
It may reach us in the present
But only if we choose to remember
And we have to let go of it
So that we can live free
Without resentment

What do you Feel

It seems so hard

Trying to understand

One another

Everyone on a computer

Trying to envision life

On a screen

I want to be free

And for people

To start

Relating

To one

Another.

Illusion of Time

“Secondary sources confirm”

The news is on at five

Old Jimi Hendrix albums burning

In a studio fire, a police

Officer dies at a fast food place

Baby left in hundred degree car

All the world is weaving stories

Electric, powerful, easygoing

I wonder where I am, lost

In a prison of the mind

Wondering where the time goes

Reality Drifts

I want to go out
Eat a hamburger
Talk to strangers
Rearrange my life
I want to eat
A bucket of ice cream
Watch tv, forget the past
I want to drink wine
Moderately, without lapsing
Into a socially defined
Cataclysm.

Jack in the Box Blues

8 am bus ride through West Los Angeles
A bunch of Russian girls,
A Chinese student, an old guy
With a walker, we're headed South
On the way, stop at Jack in the Box
Hungry for breakfast sandwich and coffee
Remind the counter girl to
Open the bathroom door
Sunrise over the Hollywood Hills
Making myself comfortable
In a plastic chair
Sipping coffee

As Pleasant as this Sounds

Morning arrives

Fresh and beautiful

I have a strawberry yogurt

And half a cup of coffee

We are on the road

a little after eight

The day goes by

Uneventfully

I feel bewildered, trapped

I don't know what to write

It just so happens to be Tuesday

The Mind Races

Don't be confused
About your thoughts
They are your own
And you own them
Some say the mind races
Others think slower
I don't know which is better
I think
Everyone
Should be valued
For their ideas.

Turn Around and Face the Wall

I got arrested in October
I was sleeping on the streets again
And a young man came up to me
Told me some guys were chasing me
So I threw a rock into a window
Of a nearby house
And waited for the police to arrive
They were there in a matter of minutes
Beats getting chased by a bunch of guys, I thought
As they put the handcuffs on
And took me down to the station

America

These are men without faces
And eyes that see from
Everywhere. These are women
With no voices and a silence
Imposed upon the impression
Of the world.

These are children who may
Grow up to believe television
And radio before their own
Parents.

This is a desolate place
Whose freedom has locked us into menial cages

Little Wisps of Tears

I call myself names
And tell me that it
Ain't the truth
You can go places
And see things
You can stay at home
Drink beer and smoke
It's all the same to me
I never understand people
Who can't get comfortable
Just being in a conversation
It seems like I'm having
One with myself again,
Or is it the moon?

The Right Time

Protests in Hong Kong fill the streets
an explosion underground sends manhole covers
soaring into the downtown l.a air.

What is the right time
for the face of reason?

How many quiet hours slowly
drift by?

Rosy lips of dawn
Arrive
Fresh and beautiful
Silence permeates the battlefield
A drone is shot down
The cry for war
Silenced and dimming
As the chances
Elevate
I wonder
What a million young men
Will do in a desert
Other than
Die?

